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Title:

Press statement - Prices Act Amendment Bill - consumer protection

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12 NOV 1970

PRESS STATEMENT:

FROM: THE PREMIER (MR. DUNSTAN)

The Premier (Mr. Dunstan) today introduced a Bill giving wide ranging powers to the Prices Commissioner which will enable him to sue suppliers on behalf of people whose consumer rights have been infringed.

The measure, the Prices Act Amendment Bill, fulfills one of the promises the ALP made in its policy speech to protect the rights of consumers.

The safeguards the Bill provides for consumers are expected to be used as a model by other Australian States.

The Bill also extends the life of the Prices Act by one year.

Introducing the Bill in the Assembly Mr. Dunstan said there was no need to stress the urgent need for legislation to combat unlawful and unfair trade practices in South Australia.

"Other States have either already passed legislation or are considering legislation on consumer protection, but in South Australia the standards in consumer protection are expected to be much more effective."

"This particular Bill will allow the Prices Commissioner to engage in research into all aspects of consumer protection, to inform and advise the consumer on all matters affecting consumer protection, and to investigate and deal with complaints from consumers.

"But most importantly it will allow the Prices Commissioner, in certain cases, to institute or defend proceedings on behalf of a dissatisfied customer.

He said that during the year ended June 30, 1970, the Prices Commissioner had investigated more than 750 complaints, and handled hundreds of general enquiries.

Mr. Dunstan said the second part of the Bill, would extend the life of the Prices Act by one year, would stop any unwarranted price increases.

"The reasons why price increases should be limited to reasonable levels are only too well known."

2.

"Prices of a number of commodities in this State are still below those in other States, although there is continual pressure to lift prices to interstate levels.

"One of the attractions for new industries to become established in South Australia is the State's favourable cost structure as compared with other States.

"Therefore it is vital that unwarranted price increases be restrained, and consumer protection be maximised."

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